

Governor's Rural Task Force

Meeting #6 – February 16, 2016, 2:00pm-4:00pm CST
Ellington Agricultural Center, Ed Jones Auditorium

Welcome, Co-Chairs

Rural Economic Opportunity Act Update, Commissioner Randy Boyd

Presentation #1 – Tennessee Rural Education Association, Dr. Allen Pratt, Executive Director

Rural Innovation Grants

Recommendation: Create Rural Innovation Grants to redesign the school system in rural areas based on a model used in Kentucky.

Presentation #2 – Rhea County Economic Development & Tourism Council, Dennis Tumlin, Executive Director

Our "Best Practice" for Rural Tourism and How to Make a Real Sustainable Economic Impact

Recommendation: Implement a revenue sharing program where 2% of state sales tax revenue in distressed counties goes back to those counties for economic development.

Presentation #3 – Knoxville Entrepreneur Center, Joy O'Shell, Director of Rural Outreach; **The Biz Foundry & Upper Cumberland Entrepreneurial Foundation**, Jeff Brown, President

Entrepreneurship & Collaboration in Rural Areas

Recommendations:

- Promote high tech, high growth companies
- Support Main Streets & Incubators
- Invest in Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs)
- Support the creative arts

Presentation #4 – Gary Garrett, Community Volunteer

Without a Vision the People Perish: Eagan, a Dying Community

Recommendations:

- Conduct a survey of community assets
- Promote tourism by developing marketing tools and webpages for the communities
- Invest in God-given assets: history, people, natural resources, heritage, artisans, music, churches, cemeteries, etc.
- Invest in infrastructure and waterway improvements like a commuter train to bring people into the community, building a road from Anthras to Eagan, and dredging the Clear Fork River
- Improve broadband access

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- Build more community and tourism infrastructure such as a park, a covered pavilion to serve as a farmers market and stage, and a zip line from mountain peak to the valley floor
- Build a new community college in this area

Presentation #5 – Tennessee Economic Council on Women, Andrea Burckhard, Board Member

Women's Issues in TN / The Cost of Gender Bias

Recommendations:

- Young women joining nontraditional fields – Tennessee businesses, schools, families, and governments must encourage young women, starting in middle school, to consider a career in non-traditional professions and trades that are growing in Tennessee, such as transportation and warehousing, production, management, and finance. In part, we can do this by providing opportunities for girls to participate in internships and workshops that immerse them in the work being done in their community. An example and one avenue through which this can be done is *Pathways Tennessee*.
- Minimizing gender bias in Tennessee's workforce – The Economic Council's Gender Bias report contains 28 specific recommendations that employers and employees can use as a tool kit to minimize the inefficiencies caused by unintentional bias in the workforce.

Presentation #6 – Three Rivers Hospital, Freda Russell, CEO & CNO

Health in Rural Communities

Recommendation:

- Improve Access to Healthier Choices in Rural Communities By:
 - Accepting WIC/SNAP at local Farmer's Market
 - Implement healthier, fresh food choices at school
 - Providing funding to bring increased physical activity back to school aged children and the community (affordable exercise facilities, opportunities to implement actual change, etc.)
- Improve Access to Care By:
 - Expanding telemedicine capabilities in rural counties and expanding broadband to make this possible
 - Improving transportation options to obtain healthcare services
 - Ensuring adequate funding to support our EMS services
 - Improving access to mental health services

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Presentation #7 – Stanton, TN, Dr. Allan Sterbinsky, Mayor

Workforce Development

Recommendation: Statewide implementation of the ACT Career Readiness Certificate.

Presentation #8 – TN Housing Development Agency, Lorrie Shearon, Chief Strategy Officer

The Significant Economic Impact of Housing Investment in Rural Tennessee

Recommendation: Invest in affordable rental properties, either through new construction or rehabilitation of old properties, to create a positive economic impact in rural communities.

Presentation #9 – USDA RD, Don Harris, Housing Program Director

Rural Town Recovery Project

Recommendations:

- Promote Rural Town Recovery to rehab, develop, and reenergize communities suffering from disinvestment, lack of available housing rehabilitation and development resources, and urban flight.
 - Needs include: demolition of abandon buildings/homes, homeowner or rental rehab, building affordable homes on vacant lots, beautification efforts by the city, marketing and education, etc.
- Consider what resources and leadership are needed to assist communities with the long-term process of recovery.
- Develop a one-stop resource location that these rural towns and cities can use to access the expertise and know how to effect real change in their communities.
- Think outside the box and be open to new ideas and strategies on saving our Tennessee towns and communities.

Presentation #10 – Tennessee Commission of Aging and Disability, Jim Shulman, Executive Director

Programs and Resources for Older Tennesseans and Adults with Disabilities

Recommendation:

- Consider various options for rural development but do not forget its impact on the aging population
- Think public-private partnerships
- Agencies working together on different goals with positive outcomes

Closing Remarks, Co-Chairs